Debate regarding recruitment standards and practices exemplifies various visions of practice that exist within a profession. In occupational therapy, early recruitment criteria provide an example of how the field's founders envisioned the professional practitioner. As occupational therapy grew in membership throughout the 1920s, that vision was challenged. This paper identifies and describes the recruitment ideas expressed by both the founders of occupational therapy and their challengers from 1900 to 1930 and suggests the influence of their ideas on recruitment standards.

Early Candidate Qualifications

In the early 1900s, occupational therapy lacked a developed technology to develop and interpret theory for use in practice. This situation prompted the recruitment of high-caliber, professionally trained women from several existing fields (Beard, 1913; Tracy, 1914). Early occupational therapy leaders hoped that such women would readily integrate the new ideas about the emerging field with their professional training. Thus, the leaders identified an early recruitment goal: to entice highly qualified women with professional training to join the field.

In their recruitment efforts spanning the prewar and war years, these leaders outlined values for occupational therapy and transferred those values to the recruitment criteria they publicized (see the Appendix). These exclusive criteria distinguished the occupational therapy leaders' values. Overall, the leaders sought female recruits from several professions, including the arts, teaching, social work, and nursing.
The recruits were to be highly skilled in their respective professions and acculturated to work. Required character traits included maturity, perseverance, an engaging personality, and a commitment to a career. The leaders also insisted on such prerequisites as a college education, previous professional training, and work experience (Johnson, 1918; “New Way for Women,” 1918; “Round Table,” 1919). One rationale for these extensive qualifications was the inadequate number of existing training courses in occupational therapy and the urgent need for highly qualified therapists. In addition, these recruiters sought educated and experienced women as potential trainers to promote more training programs (“Big Project,” 1918). The character traits and experience requirements limited applicants to a very privileged and sophisticated few. The women who were enlisted and trained for the profession in programs adhering to these standards exemplified these values.

Early Recruitment Approaches

By 1917, six persons, now regarded as the profession’s founders, incorporated the National Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy. Through this organization, the founders worked diligently on gaining further medical, military, and social acceptance for the profession. Occupational therapy offered a means to reactivate soldiers for both the military and the civilian labor force and, therefore, developed rapidly in response to the need for such personnel. The founders realized that to obtain recruits, they would have to further establish the credibility of occupational therapy. They combined recruitment with other tasks and focused their efforts on publicity. They determined that proper publicity would serve several purposes: (a) to increase public awareness of the need for occupational therapy, (b) to foster the development of hospital positions for occupational therapists, and, most importantly, (c) to encourage appropriate candidates for training. Publicity efforts were aimed at a variety of sectors.

The founders produced several newspaper articles that described occupational therapy and delineated its unique aspects. One article characterized the relationship of occupational therapy to other medical work (“New Way for Women,” 1918). The author noted that patients received this therapy after their primary nursing care was complete, generally during convalescence. This publicity stressed the point that occupational therapy involved the interests of the mind, once those interests became more important than the needs of the body. The author stated that the purpose of occupational therapy was to help those men suffering from war injuries that resulted in chronic disabilities to find themselves.

As the work of occupational therapists continued to develop, the publicity releases became more specific in their identification of the missions and goals of the field. That publicity, which appeared in various local and national newspapers, special bulletins, and pamphlets, emphasized the need for and purpose of the work. To show the value of the field and to encourage applicants, some newspaper articles expounded success stories involving particularly difficult cases. Other articles simply informed the public about occupational therapy (“Big Project,” 1918; “Making New Men,” 1918; “Upton Repairs,” 1919; “Wounded Soldiers,” 1919). A few articles explored the profession in greater depth, offering the reader a discourse on occupational therapy from several perspectives (Lawrence, 1918; Prosser, 1918). Still other articles described the work as a dramatic mission, touting occupational therapy as the solution for soldiers wounded in the war (“Expression,” [year unknown]). This genre of publicity often dramatized the work to encourage recruits while adding information on training (“Idleness Chief Foe,” 1918; “Pershing Praises,” 1919).

The placement of this publicity suggests a method of recruitment control. For example, between 1918 and 1919, brief articles appeared in the society pages of the New York Times. As occupational therapy gained recognition, it was covered in such national publications as Vogue (S.G.S., 1918). Although the visibility of the profession increased in scope from the local to the national level, publicity was restricted to reach an exclusive group of women. Thus, the media were used as a subtle screening device for applicants.

Following World War I, recruitment efforts continued to reflect the overriding mission of all members of the National Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy, now known as the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)—the continued survival of the field (Adams, 1922). Successful publicity and recruitment efforts had already greatly increased the numbers of practicing therapists and members of AOTA, who in turn capitalized on this success and continued to sponsor many publicity campaigns. These campaigns took the form of public demonstrations and announcements of occupational therapy activities in professional journals. Campaigns also included selected mailings that contained basic information about the profession, candidate qualifications, and training programs (“Fifth Annual Meeting,” 1921; Kidner, 1925; Seeley, 1925).

Although the founders and their supporters aided the pursuit of increasing the ranks of occupational therapy in peacetime, they attempted to secure the position of their image of the occupational therapist
by acknowledging some new problems with recruits. As such, they developed tactics to ensure the entry of candidates meeting their standards. Slagle (1921) described the women recruited during the war as differing greatly from those recruited after the war. She characterized this difference as the nature of their commitment to the profession. She noted that the applicants during World War I had been influenced by a spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice, whereas the postwar candidates entered the field solely to obtain a livelihood. She stressed that, to preserve the integrity of the profession, the postwar applicants should be expected to possess the same qualities as those who pursued the work during the war emergency. Slagle recommended that the qualifications for candidates include those characteristics and work experiences that would maintain exclusivity.

Throughout the postwar years, the founders and their supporters attempted to regulate recruitment activities on a national scale. Much of their influence stemmed from their control of public information regarding occupational therapy. The public outlets available to them included both general and professional publications and other public forums. Although some articles continued to appear in public newspapers and periodicals, the occupational therapy journal (called the Archives of Occupational Therapy from 1922-1925 and then renamed Occupational Therapy and Rehabilitation) published the bulk of the recruitment information. Dunton, one of the profession's founders, developed and edited this journal, which served mainly to disseminate the founders' views on recruitment; few dissenting ideas were printed.

Once the National Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy grew in membership and became AOTA, the founders quickly moved to develop recruitment standards as official policy, in an effort to control the burgeoning training programs. Determining such a policy compelled AOTA members to examine their ideas about the composition of the profession and its directions for growth. As such, two groups surfaced, signifying two different points of view. One group comprised those persons who supported the founders' view of an exclusive approach to recruitment and education, a conviction that had prevailed and determined the direction of previous recruitment efforts. The supporters of this idea envisioned a slow-growing profession made up of specially chosen women. The other group did not object to the women recruited through the founders' practices, but they encouraged opening the profession to a greater number and broader scope of women, thus rapidly adding membership. Although these two groups supported a common goal (i.e., to ensure the survival of occupational therapy and to increase the profession's influence within the health care system), their values differed. This difference became critical as the effort to regulate recruitment policies unfolded.

**Challenging Recruitment Standards**

Evidence indicates that by 1922 the influence of the founders' vision of candidates and recruitment practices began to diminish. Many factors contributed to this. One factor pertained to funding for recruitment efforts. Extraprofessional support from society women shifted from recruitment to the establishment of hospital-based occupational therapy departments (Slagle, 1922). Intraprofessional support decreased as well. In his 1923 presidential address, Kidner mentioned that the issues of both recruitment and public education suffered from a lack of funding. He cited the support extended to occupational therapy from the physicians involved in the medical journal titled Modern Hospital as an example of how non-occupational therapists were continuing the effort to increase the qualified membership of the profession. He implied that AOTA itself did not deem recruitment efforts of enough of a priority to fund its efforts sufficiently.

In its 1924 report, the AOTA Committee on Publicity and Publications, which was responsible for recruitment efforts, complained about current budget policies (“Report,” 1924). The committee reported an inability to accomplish its charge of preparing and publishing bulletins to promote occupational therapy to encourage recruitment, because no funds had been appropriated for the project. The report cited that public interest in occupational therapy continued to be stimulated by occasional newspaper articles. This report, however, contained no suggestions for further work or budget changes to support that work.

In an effort to inspire support for publicity and recruitment, Slagle, then secretary-treasurer of AOTA, presented the AOTA Board of Management with a list of the past year's publicity events (Slagle, 1926). She cited the presentations on recruitment, which included several papers delivered by occupational therapists at the American Hospital Association's annual meeting and the AOTA president's address to the General Foundation of Women's clubs. She also mentioned the many requests for information regarding educational therapy that came to the AOTA office regularly. Slagle urged continuing such public information endeavors and suggested incorporating a full-time speech-making position into the AOTA roster of officers. As noted by the budget allocations that year, her suggestions went unheeded (“Report,” 1926).

Although the founders continued to control the official journal and maintain authority on the AOTA Board of Managers, dissenting voices emerged and gained influence among both the Board of Managers and the AOTA general membership. The founders
continued to lobby for increased recruitment efforts in accordance with their views. In an open meeting of the Board of Managers, one supporter eloquently stated that recruitment policies must discourage women planning to work in occupational therapy only temporarily. Others suggested a policy of recruiting only those willing to make a career commitment. Supporters of the founders' view argued that such a candidate would serve to solidify the work force and add quality to the field ("Minutes," 1925). Such a policy, however, was never instituted.

As the decade following the war drew to a close, the Board of Managers' continued lack of interest in recruitment resulted in a shift of those responsibilities to individual training schools. Recognizing this shift, Kidner (1927) attempted to revitalize membership's sense of obligation to recruitment policies. In his presidential address, he reiterated the founding purposes of AOTA, noting that one of the organization's primary missions was to disseminate accurate information about occupational therapy in order to gain social acceptance for the work and increase the recruitment of potential therapists. His technique of creating a cause to stir up interest in recruitment, however, proved unsuccessful.

Notably, several founders' supporters served as directors of the training schools and assumed recruitment responsibilities independently. Their recruitment policies perpetuated their values, as evidenced by their appeal to upper-class women. One new school in Montana, which advertised itself as unique in its professional training for women, offering a didactic course of study combined with an entire vocational training system. This advertisement suggested an image of the occupational therapist through the use of an accompanying picture of a beautiful woman richly dressed in hat and fur ("Is Only State," 1927).

Despite the setbacks, the founders' supporters proceeded in their attempts to gain recruits of their choosing and to fund that effort. Several persons spoke on the subject of occupational therapy at women's colleges. One such event occurred in 1927 at the Connecticut College for Women, where Marjorie Greene, dean of the Boston School of Occupational Therapy, lectured on the advances in occupational therapy science ("Occupational Therapy Notes," 1927). Greene stressed the increasing importance of the field and the resulting shortage of therapists throughout the country. She thus attempted to recruit a certain type of woman whose qualifications met those specified by the founders. Other supporters of this view began to elicit financial aid from outside the profession. In one instance, the Connecticut Occupational Therapy Society suggested that the best place to recruit young women was from the pool of daughters of women who belonged to women's clubs. To this end, the Connecticut society sought financial support from their state federation of women's clubs to help spread information about occupational therapy to club members.

Throughout the late 1920s, the founders' supporters remained active in pursuing their particular brand of publicity for occupational therapy. They placed announcements in newspapers around the country chronicling special occupational therapy events ("Therapy Association," 1928). Reminiscent of the placement strategies the founders employed throughout World War I, most of these announcements appeared in the women's section of local newspapers and often described the events as ladies clubs' activities ("Announcement," 1928; "Redeeming the Mentally Sick," 1928, "Tenth Anniversary," 1928).

In a final attempt to gain support for their recruitment concerns, the founders' supporters sent a message, in the guise of an official occupational therapy newsletter, to specially chosen practicing therapists. The purpose of this circular was to announce a serious recruitment problem for the profession and to elicit the aid of these therapists in alleviating this problem. Its content was designed to encourage the therapists to develop new job positions in their respective departments and to recruit acceptable candidates for training to fill these positions ("Newsletter," 1932). The supporters used this technique to increase recruitment within a specific group by word of mouth and limited recommendation. As such, they sought to maintain their defined standards for recruits.

Opposition to the recruitment standards set by the founders developed gradually throughout the 1920s, as AOTA membership grew. While the immediate pressing need for new therapists abated after the end of World War I, continued recruitment of candidates for training was essential to the growth and development of the profession. Because occupational therapy no longer enjoyed global support from either society groups or the military, the maintenance of professional credibility through numbers became problematic. While the founders' supporters were aggressively conducting recruitment efforts aimed at candidates of their choice, a new method of meeting recruitment goals was emerging. AOTA members supporting this alternative view believed that although the candidates chosen according to the founders' values were acceptable, other candidates might be acceptable as well. This new group argued that more extensive and less exclusive recruitment criteria, comprising less rigorous prerequisites for training and training standards, were the key to professional survival (Elizabeth Upham Davis, personal communication, October 12, 1983).

Shortly after World War I, this new group pro-
moted a program that recognized candidates trained during the war as qualified occupational therapists. These therapists worked in military hospitals, where they were trained exclusively by experience, that is, without the benefit of didactic course work. To date, we do not know the initial screening process used to select candidates for acceptance into the military hospitals' occupational therapy departments, where these women gained their experience. Perhaps they met the same social, educational, age, and experiential requirements as those with the otherwise approved training ("An Alternative," 1921).

As the popularity of occupational therapy grew, aggressive publicity for unqualified training centers threatened the integrity of the profession. In the early 1920s, several training programs began to take advantage of the need for therapists and the interests of young women seeking careers by accepting students unable to qualify for the traditional training programs. These pirate schools attracted candidates by promoting occupational therapy as a "cure-all and solution to all ailments" (Carew, 1923, p. 746). Their recruitment materials failed to cite specific educational or experiential requirements, nor did they mention distinctive character attributes. Although the founders and their supporters considered these programs renegade, other AOTA members did not object to them, because these programs promised to increase the numbers of practicing therapists and to encourage candidates from various backgrounds to join the profession. Because AOTA had not yet approved a method for accrediting training programs, there was no official way of qualifying or disqualifying these programs.

Whereas the founders' supporters took the responsibility for disseminating information about occupational therapy to the public in the hopes of recruiting within their exclusive framework, the new group hoped that such activity would increase the number of applicants from a variety of social positions. In 1925, the Research and Efficiency Committee offered the Board of Managers several strategies for recruitment publicity ("Minutes," 1925). These strategies included publicity by individual state associations and hospital occupational therapy departments; the publication of articles on occupational therapy in medical magazines, newspapers, and other state publications; and exhibits at medical meetings, clinics, public fairs, and club meetings. AOTA approved this effort, and one result of such publicity was an exhibit and a demonstration of occupational therapy at the 1925 Kentucky State Fair.

The use of public exhibits that expounded the founders' view of candidates continued to be of major importance to the recruitment process. Eventually, however, AOTA, apparently influenced by others, withheld support for these measures (Slagle, 1926; "Useful Report," 1926). They depleted funding for recruitment and redistributed publicity tasks, rendering any further recruitment efforts by the founders' supporters ineffective. Specifically, public relations activities in 1924 received $1,000 out of a total budget of $7,100, or 14% of appropriated funds ("Report," 1924). The following year, the total budget of $4,000 included $600 (i.e., 15%) for research, development work, and contingencies. Contingencies included publicity ("Report," 1925). By the end of 1926, however, only 4% of the budget was allotted to research and contingencies. This change indicated not only an 11% drop in proportional AOTA support, but also a change in recruitment practices. General publicity was no longer included in the budget, having been absorbed by research and contingencies ("Report," 1926). Recruitment responsibilities were being shifted to sources outside of AOTA.

One highly influential Board of Managers member is known to have supported the newly emerging view and to have gathered the voters' support at times of decision making on these issues (Elizabeth Upham Davis, personal communication, October 12, 1983). This occurred despite the founders' established influence within the profession's media and on the Board of Managers. Although the reasons remain unclear, by the late 1920s, the issue of recruitment no longer interested enough Board of Managers members to keep it in the purview of AOTA. Thus, recruitment efforts were redirected to the training schools, and AOTA focused on determining educational standards.

Summary

The early years of occupational therapy represented an era of developing ideologies about the new profession's missions and values. The expression of these ideas can be seen in differing views of recruitment standards and in the emergence of the two groups representing those views. One group, comprising the profession's founders and the founders' supporters, promoted an exclusionary recruitment policy that favored upper-class, highly educated, professionally experienced women. This group actively sought candidates through a restricted women's network that included the society pages of newspapers, lectures at exclusive women's colleges, and referrals from upper-class women's clubs. The other group embraced the founders' candidates but disagreed with exclusionary recruitment practices. It may be inferred from the limited existing evidence that this new group, although less vocal, appeared to favor the recruitment of women from more diverse backgrounds. This group did not consider extensive education and previous professional experience to be the only mea-
sures of quality for candidates; they also approved of
general management experience gained in the home
or through a nonprofessional job. Although the
founders and their supporters controlled information
available to the profession’s members, the new group
apparently wielded greater policy-making influence.
Discussions as early as 1923 that established the first
official entry-level education requirements indicate
that the Board of Managers officially supported re-
cruitment policies that were nonrestrictive and open
to a relatively broad scope of persons (‘‘Minimum
Standards,’’ 1924).

Although the two groups disagreed on the scope
of who should be allowed to enter the field, the na-
ture of their disagreement was one of degree. Both
groups supported recruitment efforts among white,
educated women only. Not until the end of the 1930s
did either group voice interest in recruiting from
other populations, and not until World War II was
such recruitment initiated. The differing visions of the
occupational therapist and the implications of those
visions for recruitment standards and education prac-
tices have continued to influence the evolution of the
profession. ▲

Appendix

Recruitment Standards of the Occupational
Therapy Founders

Demographics
- 20 to 40 years of age; over 23 years preferred
- Associated with women’s clubs
- Well groomed and in good health

Commitment
- Willing to work long hours; career commitment
- Willing to forego luxuries and comforts of a normal
  home life
- Earnestness of purpose; integrity of purpose
- Willingness to work with patients
- Self-sacrificing
- Love for vocation

Personality
- Taciturn, sympathetic; possesses brotherly love
- Willing to do; adaptable
- Refined, pleasing
- Patriotic
- Inexhaustibly cheerful
- Versatile, persistent, patient
- Understanding of human nature
- Vision

Intellect
- Common sense and sound judgment
- High-caliber intelligence
- Power of using the mind in adapting to the needs of the
  patient

Education
- College graduate or high school background plus some
  additional education and work experience

Experience
- Experience in the arts; gymnastics instructor
- Teacher; grounded in pedagogy and sociology
- Craft worker; skills in particular occupation
- Fine basic training; hospital experience
- Real home responsibilities; social service training

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